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RPT

July 15, 1999

Minerals Management Services
Mail Stop 4024
381 Elden Street
Herndon, VA 20170-4817

R&B Falcon comments on proposed (rule) changes to 30 CFR 250 Subpart O.

Dear Sir:

Supplementary Information

Comments to questions posed on p19320

1. Is there a specific written test score we should use to signify competency? Seventy percent is the obvious choice but without a chance to review the test questions, really no meaningful recommendation can be made. What needs to be done is to have an industry group go through and evaluate the test questions or use a professional of some sort to validate the questions.
2. If a test score is below the competency level, should MMS issue an INC, retest, or other enforcement action? It seems to us that an INC should only be issued for a major infraction such as a company found guilty of not training according to their plan. Any individual who fails a written test should simply be required to repeat the company training program with verification sent to MMS. Only upon MMS determining that several individuals have failed a test either at the same time or over a period of time MMS should then initiate an audit which might lead to an INC.
3. What should we focus on when conducting employee interviews? Interviews should focus on whether or not the employee has been trained according to the company training plan.
4. What type of enforcement action should MMS initiate if during an interview an employee exhibits only a minimal understanding of employers training program? Again, probably nothing if this involves only one employee or perhaps even more than two if they are relative new hire personnel. The company training plan will never keep pace with turnover, promotions, demotions, and transfers 100%. However, should interviews reveal that even experienced employees have only a minimal understanding of the company training plan, our recommendation is that MMS should consider an audit of the company's training plan. Should MMS determine that a company is not following through on their training plan, or that the training plan is not adequate, it may consider issuing an INC.
5. Are there any situations where MMS should not allow an employee to continue working on the OCS? No. Our position is that if, in an MMS inspector's opinion, an individual(s) is not competent, the MMS inspector should work with the OIM to see that the individual(s) is removed from any safety sensitive duties until appropriate re-training can be accomplished.
6. Under what circumstances should we initiate hands-on training of employees? This brings into play the need for simulators, etc which considerably broadens the scope of this discussion. Our recommendation is that hands-on testing should take the form of testing drilling crews on the rig floor to confirm that in the event of a kick, all applicable persons can demonstrate that they a) know where they physically need to be, b) can

verbalize their duties, and c) can physically demonstrate those duties if operations will not be adversely affected. An expanded kick drill, if you will.

Clarity of this Regulation

Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995

1. Develop and maintain training plans (average 2.2 hours per plan)..... This seems grossly misguessed in our opinion. Even factoring in a 3 year average we feel 2.2 weeks is much closer than 2.2 hours.
2. Maintain documentation of employee training activities (average 5 minutes per training record). It probably takes about 5 minutes to input a certificate into a database and file the hard copy, but what about scheduling employees for training, making travel arrangements, approving invoices, etc? Not to mention time to develop certain company materials to ensure compliance with training listed in the "Training Elements" table. We admit we are already training most of our employees in a manner very close to that which will be required when we put together our training plan, but 5 minutes per year per employee in extra time really doesn't do justice to the situation. An exact figure is difficult to determine but our best guess is maybe 30 minutes per employee the first year and 15 minutes per year thereafter.

250.1500 Definitions

We note that contractor is not defined here not mentioned throughout the proposed rule, but that Contractor (read – Drilling Contractor) was mentioned by the MMS at the 10 June workshop in Houston. We believe the role of the Drilling Contractor should be defined in this section.

250.1502 What Are My General Responsibilities For Training?

(b) (1) Verbal conversations with MMS representatives have led us to believe that a Lessee or Drilling Contractor may tailor their training plan for their operation(s). That is, if they never or very rarely expect to perform hot tapping it is not necessary to include this in the training plan. Our recommendation is that mention of this ability to "custom tailor" the Training Plan should be specifically mentioned in the final rule.

- (4) If (Drilling) Contractors are specifically mentioned in the final rule, shouldn't the reference here be to "contractors" really mean "subcontractors". Also, industry will require guidance on what, exactly, constitutes a subcontractor. For example, would it include casing crews, loggers, mud engineers, and catering crews?

250.1503 What Well Control Training Must My Employees Receive?

We strongly recommend the MMS incorporate by reference well control training resulting in IADC Wellcap certification as being acceptable. Not the only choice, but one thing the MMS does find acceptable. We believe this will be very important to Drilling Contractors in dealing with a plethora of Operators all having different training plans and methods of evaluating Drilling Contractors. We feel that our industry has acted in a responsible and proactive fashion in the development of Wellcap and we would very much like to see that rewarded by MMS with a specific reference in the final rule. Again, this is very important to us.

250.1510 (1) Training System Audit

We note a training system audit be conducted by MMS personnel and/or its authorized representative. We urge MMS to remove the reference to "authorized personnel" in this context. We feel this could lead to the use of training provider personnel or even Lessee or Drilling Contractor personnel to audit (evaluate) each other's training plans. While this may not be MMS intent, the door is certainly open for this to happen. We are firmly convinced that any practice where MMS uses industry personnel to police other industry personnel essentially "sets us against each other" and is not in anyone's long term best interest.

- (3) Recommend removing "authorized representative" here also.

- (4) In this case we understand the use of the term "authorized representative" would be needed to allow for owners/operators of simulators to be included since MMS has neither well control simulation equipment or personnel to operate such equipment. We still look on this term with a certain trepidation.

Final Comment

While we do not see an implementation timeline specifically set out in the Proposed Rule, we understand MMS intends to phase in the proposed rule over a 90 day period. We believe this is way too fast and recommend at least 180 days.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Grayson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Richard Grayson
Training Manager
On behalf of
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